Driest March for years

31 March 2011 - March has been a very dry month in many parts of the UK.

Provisional Met Office rainfall figures for March indicate that the month is likely to be one of the driest on record, even with rain falling over recent days.

The UK average rainfall total from 1 to 29 March was 39.1 mm - 41% of the long-term average for the whole of the month which is 95.9 mm.

This provisional figure makes it the driest March since 1953 when 41.6 mm of rain was recorded. However, this month's figure will increase following the rain which has fallen over the last few days.

England and Wales were particularly dry, with provisional figures suggesting the month could be amongst the driest in the past 100 years.

Although Northern Ireland and Scotland have been drier than average, provisional figures show the two nations less dry during the month.

Many regions within the UK are expected to have had one of their driest March months for a century but with further rainfall being added to monthly totals, this remains unconfirmed.

This table shows the rainfall for 1-29 March across the UK. *All figures are provisional.*

	Long-term average rainfall for March (1971-2000)	**Average rainfall 1-29 March**	**Driest March (in series since 1910)**
UK	95.9 mm	39.1 mm	1929 (17.0 mm)
England	66.6 mm	13.3 mm	1929 (7.8 mm)
Northern Ireland	93.5 mm	46.0 mm	1953 (16.4 mm)
Scotland	138.7 mm	86.3 mm	1929 (28.7 mm)
Wales	118.8 mm	17.8 mm	1944 (21.0 mm)

Meanwhile, despite sunshine amounts being above average across much of the UK this month, provisional figures show that March 2009 was sunnier. Indeed, March 2011 follows a spell of sunny March months over recent years.

Provisional figures for the whole month will be available next week.

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